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Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

The time period for reply, if any, is set in the attached communication.

Notice of the Office communication was sent electronically on above-indicated "Notification Date" to the following e-mail address(es):

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Office Action Summary

Application No.

10/769,970

Applicant(s)

PROROCK ET AL.

Examiner

Alvin L. Brown

Art Unit

4127

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 February 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-25 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 02 February 2004 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-8508)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date 02/02/2004
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
- Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
- 6) ☐ Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

This communication is a first Office Action Non-Final rejection on the merits. Claims 1 – 25, as originally filed, are currently pending and have been considered.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. **Claims 1, 6, 12, 17, 23 – 25 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al., (US 6,837,428 B2) in view of Jovicic et al., (US 5,855,007).**

As per claim 1, Lee et al., teaches a method for processing coupons by a self checkout system, wherein the self checkout system comprises at least one self checkout station coupled to a server (see column 5, line 63 through column 6 line 5, which teach a self check out system such as the automatic checkout system, line 40, is connected to BOSS controller that is in turn connected to a local area network. Examiner construes that the BOSS controller is a server).

(a) receiving a coupon from a customer by one of the at least one self checkout stations (see column 7, line 52 through line 56 which teach a shopper scans coupons that are related to items that were previously scanned and the coupon's code is matched to the item's code it is related to);

(b) attempting to validate the coupon against at least one item scanned by the customer (see column 7, line 52 through line 61 which teach a shopper scans items and scans in coupons related to those items. When both the items and coupons are scanned a coupon code and the related item code is matched to verify if the coupon applies to the related scanned item).

However, Lee et al., fails to disclose:

(c) storing the coupon in a coupon pool at the server if the coupon fails to validate against the at least one item, such that the stored coupon can be utilized at a subsequent sales transaction.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step of storing a coupon in a coupon pool at a server if the coupon fails to validate against the at least one item, such that the stored coupon can be utilized at a subsequent sales transaction (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices connected into public networks).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing

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and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 6, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however fails to disclose the storing step (c) further comprises:

(c1) storing the coupon in a personal pool at the server, wherein the personal pool is associated with the customer

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for storing the coupon in a personal pool at the server, wherein the personal pool is associated with the customer (see Jovicic et al., column 6, lines 5 – 14 which teach the Internet Coupon Server 124 include a user database 126 that keeps track of an individual user registered with the server).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 12, Lee et al., teaches a computer readable medium containing program instructions for processing coupons by a self checkout system, wherein the self checkout system comprises at least one self checkout station coupled to a server (see

column 5, line 63 through column 6 line 5, which teach a self check out system such as the automatic checkout system, line 40, is connected to BOSS controller that is in turn connected to a local area network. Examiner construes that the BOSS controller is a server).

(a) receiving a coupon from a customer by one of the at least one self checkout stations (see column 7, line 52 through line 56 which teach a shopper scans coupons that are related to items that were previously scanned and the coupon's code is matched to the item's code it is related to);

(b) attempting to validate the coupon against at least one item scanned by the customer (see column 7, line 52 – 61 which teach a shopper scans items and scans in coupons related to those items. When both the items and coupons are scanned a coupon code and the related item code is matched to verify if the coupon applies to the related scanned item).

However, Lee et al., fails to disclose

(c) storing the coupon in a coupon pool at the server if the coupon fails to validate against the at least one item, such that the stored coupon can be utilized at a subsequent sales transaction.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step to store a coupon in a coupon pool at a server if the coupon fails to validate against the at least one item, such that the stored coupon can be utilized at a subsequent sales transaction (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores

coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices connected into public networks).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 17, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however fails to disclose the storing instruction (c) further comprises:

(c1) storing the coupon in a personal pool at the server, wherein the personal pool is associated with the customer

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for storing the coupon in a personal pool at the server, wherein the personal pool is associated with the customer (see column 6, lines 5 – 14 which teach the Internet Coupon Server 124 include a user database 126 that keeps track of an individual user registered with the server).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with

the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 23, Lee et al., discloses a self checkout system comprising:

a server for managing the self checkout system (see column 5, line 63 through column 6 line 5, which teach a self check out system such as the automatic checkout system, line 40, is connected to BOSS controller that is in turn connected to a local area network. Examiner construes that the BOSS controller is a server); and

at least one self checkout station coupled to the server, wherein the at least one self checkout station comprises:

a scanner for scanning at least one item for purchase by a customer (see column 5, lines 40 – 46 which teach a laser universal product code UPC) reader, analogous to a product scanner);

a coupon reader for receiving a coupon from the customer (see column 7, lines 12 – 15 which teach a UPC scanner where paper coupons are scanned).

However, Lee et al., fails to disclose a coupon manager for validating the coupon against the at least one item scanned by the customer, wherein if the coupon fails to validate, the coupon manager stores the coupon in a coupon pool at the server such that the stored coupon can be utilized at a subsequent sales transaction.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step to store a coupon in a coupon pool at a server if the coupon fails to validate against the at least one item, such

that the stored coupon can be utilized at a subsequent sales transaction (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices connected into public networks).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 24, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however fails to disclose a global pool for storing the unvalidated coupon, wherein the global pool is accessible by all customers.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for a global pool to store the unvalidated coupon, wherein the global pool is accessible by all customers (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices connected into public networks. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to a global pool providing access to coupons to all customers with computing devices column 6 lines 39 - 41).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 25, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however fails to disclose the server further comprises communication means for allowing a customer or item manufacturer to access the global pool.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step comprising communication means for allowing a customer or item manufacturer to access the global pool (see column 6 lines 14 – 18 which teach an Internet Coupon Notification Center Gateway 132 provides the capability of Internet Coupon Notification, ICNC, Centers/coupon owners to access an Internet Coupon server. Examiner construes that an ICNC is analogous to a manufacturer therefore, therefore the ICNC gateway provides communication capabilities to manufacturers to gain access to the coupon server where the global pool resides).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a

server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

3. Claims 2 - 5, 7 - 9, 13 - 16, 18 - 20 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al., in view of Jovicic et al., as applied to claims 1 and 12, and further in view of Nichtberger et al., (4,882,675)

As per claim 2, Lee et al., further discloses:

(c2) transmitting the electronic coupon from the one self checkout station to the server (see column 6, line 63 – 66 which teach a shopper scans coupons that are related to items that were previously scanned and the coupon's UPC code is matched to the item's code it is related to and the information is managed by the controller, which examiner construes to be the analogous action of transmitting the electronic coupon to the server where it will be managed).

However, the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination fails to disclose the coupon is a paper coupon and the storing step (c) further comprises:

(c1) converting the paper coupon into an electronic coupon; and

(c3) destroying the paper coupon.

Nichtberger et al., discloses a paperless system for distributing, redeeming and clearing merchandise coupons with a step for:

(c1) converting the paper coupon into an electronic coupon (see column 29, lines 56 – 63 which teach a coupon distribution and redemption unit accepts paper coupon by

reading a scanned paper coupon's UPC code and adding the code to a list of electronic coupons available for redemption);

(c3) destroy paper coupons (see column 29, lines 56 - 68 which teach a coupon distribution and redemption, CDR, unit that contains a scanner capable of reading paper coupons destroys them once they have inserted and read by the CDR unit).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., with the paperless system for redeeming coupons as taught by Nichtberger et al. The motivation to combine the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination with the methods described by Nichtberger et al., is to provide customers with the ability to make a selection of coupons from a display and for recording the selection.

As per claim 3, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention as applied to claim 1 above, but fails to disclose:

(c1) converting the paper coupon into an electronic coupon;

(c2) collecting tracking information related to the coupon and storing the tracking information in a file at the server; and

(c3) storing the coupon in a global pool at the server, wherein the global pool is accessible by all customers.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the steps for:

(c2) collecting tracking information related to the coupon and storing the tracking information in a file at the server (see column 6, lines 39 – 58 which teach a server such as the Internet Coupon Server maintain current information on electronic coupons such as expiration date, UPC code and unique serial number); and

(c3) storing the coupon in a global pool at the server, wherein the global pool is accessible by all customers (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices connected into public networks. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to a global pool providing access to coupons to all customers with computing devices column 6 lines 39 – 41).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

Nichtberger et al., discloses a paperless system for distributing, redeeming and clearing merchandise coupons with a step for:

(c1) converting the paper coupon into an electronic coupon (see column 29, lines 56 – 63 which teach a coupon distribution and redemption unit accepts paper coupon by

reading a scanned paper coupon's UPC code and adding the code to a list of electronic coupons available for redemption).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., with the paperless system for redeeming coupons as taught by Nichtberger et al. The motivation to combine the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination with the system described by Nichtberger et al., is to provide customers with the ability to make a selection of coupons from a display and for recording the selection.

As per claim 4, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

(d) allowing a second customer in the subsequent sales transaction to utilize the coupon in the global pool.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(d) allowing a second customer in the subsequent sales transaction to utilize the coupon in the global pool (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices connected into public networks. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to a global pool providing access to coupons to all customers with computing devices column 6 lines 39 – 41. Therefore, a second customer would have access to an un-redeemed coupon stored on the server).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 5, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, and further discloses:

(d2) deducting a value of the coupon from a price of the item if the coupon and the item are validated (see Lee et al., column 7, lines 62 – 66 which teach a coupon UPC code is associated with one of the items previously scanned, then a credit is applied to the current total of the shopping transaction).

However, Lee et al., fails to disclose:

(d1) searching the global pool for a coupon that validates against an item scanned by the second customer during the subsequent sales transaction.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(d1) searching the global pool for a coupon that validates against an item scanned by the second customer during the subsequent sales transaction (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices, such as a second user, connected into public networks. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server

124 is analogous to a global pool providing access to coupons to all customers with computing devices column 6 lines 39 – 41. Therefore, a second customer would have access to an un-redeemed coupon stored on the server); and

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 7, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

- (d) accessing the global pool at the server by the customer;
- (e) selecting at least one coupon in the global pool; and
- (f) transferring the selected coupon to a personal account at the server.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(d) accessing the global pool at the server by the customer (see column 7, lines 46 – 52 which teach a customer accesses the Internet Coupon Server 124 to select an electronic coupon. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to the claimed global pool).

(e) selecting at least one coupon in the global pool (see column 7, lines 46 – 52 which teach a customer accesses the Internet Coupon Server 124 to select an electronic coupon. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to the claimed global pool); and

(f) transferring the selected coupon to a personal account at the server (see column 8, lines 4 – 10 which teach a user searches for an electronic coupon on the coupon server and later transmits that coupon to the user's account/node).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 8, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

- (d) receiving the tracking information in the file by an item manufacturer;
- (e) accessing the global pool at the server by the item manufacturer;
- (f) selecting at least one coupon in the global pool;
- (g) analyzing the tracking information for the selected coupon; and
- (h) modifying the selected coupon.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(d) receiving the tracking information in the file by an item manufacturer (see column 2, lines 21 – 38 which teach a manufacturer is facilitated with detailed information about the consumer that submitted the coupon for redemption);

(e) accessing the global pool at the server by the item manufacturer (see column 6, lines 34 – 41 which teach a coupon provider/a member of the Internet Coupon Notification Center, ICNC, such as an item manufacturer periodically communicates with coupon server to maintain the electronic coupon information current);

(f) selecting at least one coupon in the global pool (see column 7, lines 46 – 52 which teach a customer accesses the Internet Coupon Server 124 to select an electronic coupon. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to the claimed global pool);

(g) analyzing the tracking information for the selected coupon (see column 6, lines 39 – 58 which teach a server such as the Internet Coupon Server maintain current information on electronic coupons such as expiration date, UPC code and unique serial number; column 7, lines 19 - 24 adds that the coupon owner/manufacture performs marketing research using an electronic coupon unique serial number. Examiner construes that this process is analogous to a manufacturer analyzing the electronic coupon specific tracking information stored on the coupon server); and

(h) modifying the selected coupon (see column 11, lines 41 – 47 which teach an ICNC/item manufacturer accesses the coupon server and changes the coupon information electronically).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 9, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

(h1) modifying a price of the item based on the analysis

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(h1) modifying a price of the item based on the analysis (see column 11, lines 41 – 47 which teach an ICNC/item manufacturer accesses the coupon server and changes the coupon information electronically. Examiner construes that price is a component of the coupon which follows that changing the coupon's information is analogous to changing the coupon's price).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that

includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 13, Lee et al., further discloses:

(c2) transmitting the electronic coupon from the one self checkout station to the server (see Lee et al., column 6, line 63 – 66 which teach a shopper scans coupons that are related to items that were previously scanned and the coupon's UPC code is matched to the item's code it is related to and the information is managed by the controller, which examiner construes to be the analogous action of transmitting the electronic coupon to the server where it will be managed).

However, the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination fails to disclose the coupon is a paper coupon and the storing step (c) further comprises:

(c1) converting the paper coupon into an electronic coupon; and

(c3) destroying the paper coupon.

Nichtberger et al., discloses a paperless system for distributing, redeeming and clearing merchandise coupons with a step for:

(c1) converting the paper coupon into an electronic coupon (see column 29, lines 56 – 63 which teach a coupon distribution and redemption unit accepts paper coupon by reading a scanned paper coupon's UPC code and adding the code to a list of electronic coupons available for redemption);

(c3) destroying paper coupons (see column 29, lines 56 - 68 which teach a coupon distribution and redemption, CDR, unit that contains a scanner capable of reading paper coupons destroys them once they have inserted and read by the CDR unit).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., with the paperless system for redeeming coupons as taught by Nichtberger et al. The motivation to combine the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination with the methods described by Nichtberger et al., is to provide customers with the ability to make a selection of coupons from a display and for recording the selection.

As per claim 14, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention as applied to claim 12 above, but fails to disclose:

- (c1) converting the paper coupon into an electronic coupon;
- (c2) collecting tracking information related to the coupon and storing the tracking information in a file at the server; and
- (c3) storing the coupon in a global pool at the server, wherein the global pool is accessible by all customers.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the steps for:

- (c2) collecting tracking information related to the coupon and storing the tracking information in a file at the server (see column 6, lines 39 – 58 which teach a server such

as the Internet Coupon Server maintain current information on electronic coupons such as expiration date, UPC code and unique serial number); and

(c3) storing the coupon in a global pool at the server, wherein the global pool is accessible by all customers (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices connected into public networks. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to a global pool providing access to coupons to all customers with computing devices column 6 lines 39 - 41).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

Nichtberger et al., discloses a paperless system for distributing, redeeming and clearing merchandise coupons with a step for:

(c1) converting the paper coupon into an electronic coupon (see column 29, lines 56 - 63 which teach a coupon distribution and redemption unit accepts paper coupon by reading a scanned paper coupon's UPC code and adding the code to a list of electronic coupons available for redemption).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., with the paperless system for redeeming coupons as taught by Nichtberger et al. The motivation to combine the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination with the system described by Nichtberger et al., is to provide customers with the ability to make a selection of coupons from a display and for recording the selection.

As per claim 15, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

(d) allowing a second customer in the subsequent sales transaction to utilize the coupon in the global pool.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(d) allowing a second customer in the subsequent sales transaction to utilize the coupon in the global pool (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices connected into public networks. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to a global pool providing access to coupons to all customers with computing devices column 6 lines 39 – 41. Therefore, a second customer would have access to an un-redeemed coupon stored on the server).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that

includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 16, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, and further discloses:

(d2) deducting a value of the coupon from a price of the item if the coupon and the item are validated (see Lee et al., column 7, lines 62 – 66 which teach a coupon UPC code is associated with one of the items previously scanned, then a credit is applied to the current total of the shopping transaction).

However, Lee et al., fails to disclose:

(d1) searching the global pool for a coupon that validates against an item scanned by the second customer during the subsequent sales transaction.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(d1) searching the global pool for a coupon that validates against an item scanned by the second customer during the subsequent sales transaction (see column 6, lines 4 - 14 which teach an Internet Coupon Server 124 that receives and stores coupons, ready for selection by users of computing devices, such as a second user, connected into public networks. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to a global pool providing access to coupons to all customers with

computing devices column 6 lines 39 – 41. Therefore, a second customer would have access to an un-redeemed coupon stored on the server); and

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 18, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

- (d) accessing the global pool at the server by the customer;
- (e) selecting at least one coupon in the global pool; and
- (f) transferring the selected coupon to a personal account at the server.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(d) accessing the global pool at the server by the customer (see column 7, lines 46 – 52 which teach a customer accesses the Internet Coupon Server 124 to select an electronic coupon. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to the claimed global pool).

(e) selecting at least one coupon in the global pool (see column 7, lines 46 – 52 which teach a customer accesses the Internet Coupon Server 124 to select an

electronic coupon. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to the claimed global pool); and

(f) transferring the selected coupon to a personal account at the server (see column 8, lines 4 – 10 which teach a user searches for an electronic coupon on the coupon server and later transmits that coupon to the user's account/node).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 19, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

- (d) receiving the tracking information in the file by an item manufacturer;
- (e) accessing the global pool at the server by the item manufacturer;
- (f) selecting at least one coupon in the global pool;
- (g) analyzing the tracking information for the selected coupon; and
- (h) modifying the selected coupon.

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(d) receiving the tracking information in the file by an item manufacturer (see column 2, lines 21 – 38 which teach a manufacturer is facilitated with detailed information about the consumer that submitted the coupon for redemption);

(e) accessing the global pool at the server by the item manufacturer (see column 6, lines 34 – 41 which teach a coupon provider/a member of the Internet Coupon Notification Center, ICNC, such as an item manufacturer periodically communicates with coupon server to maintain the electronic coupon information current);

(f) selecting at least one coupon in the global pool (see column 7, lines 46 – 52 which teach a customer accesses the Internet Coupon Server 124 to select an electronic coupon. Examiners construes that the Internet Coupon Server 124 is analogous to the claimed global pool);

(g) analyzing the tracking information for the selected coupon (see column 6, lines 39 – 58 which teach a server such as the Internet Coupon Server maintain current information on electronic coupons such as expiration date, UPC code and unique serial number; column 7, lines 19 - 24 adds that the coupon owner/manufacture performs marketing research using an electronic coupon unique serial number. Examiner construes that this process is analogous to a manufacturer analyzing the electronic coupon specific tracking information stored on the coupon server); and

(h) modifying the selected coupon (see column 11, lines 41 – 47 which teach an ICNC/item manufacturer accesses the coupon server and changes the coupon information electronically).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

As per claim 20, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

(h1) modifying a price of the item based on the analysis

Jovicic et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(h1) modifying a price of the item based on the analysis (see column 11, lines 41 – 47 which teach an ICNC/item manufacturer accesses the coupon server and changes the coupon information electronically. Examiner construes that price is a component of the coupon which follows that changing the coupon's information is analogous to changing the coupon's price).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., with the system for storing a coupon on a server for later use as taught by Jovicic et al. The motivation to combine Lee et al., with the system described by Jovicic et al., is to provide an interactive system for dispensing

and controlling electronic coupons where the coupons may be shared or transferred among users.

4. Claims 10 – 11, 21 – 22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Lee et al., in view of Jovicic et al., as applied to claims 8, 9, 19 and 20 above, and further in view of Goodwin, III et al., (US 6,696,920 B1).

As per claim 10, the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

(i) implementing the modified price immediately via an electronic shelf label associated with the item.

Goodwin, III et al., discloses a method of changing an electronic price label display sequence with the step for:

(i) implementing the modified price immediately via an electronic shelf label associated with the item (see column 2, lines 63 through column 3, lines 1 – 6 which teach an electronic price label, EPL, through a managed process is capable of making changes to a display information, which includes price information).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., with the electronic price changing method as taught by Goodwin, III et al. The motivation to combine the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination with the methods described by Goodwin III et al., is to provide a flexible system for making immediate changes to the price of an item.

As per claim 11, the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

(h1) modifying an expiration date of the selected coupon.

Goodwin, III et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(h1) modifying an expiration date of the selected coupon (see column 2, lines 63 through column 3, lines 1 – 6 which teach an electronic price label, EPL, through a managed process is capable of making changes to a display information, which includes promotional information. Examiner construes that changing the promotion information includes making changing changes to a coupon expiration date).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., with the electronic price changing method as taught by Goodwin, III et al. The motivation to combine the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination with the methods described by Goodwin III et al., is to provide a flexible system for making immediate changes to a coupon's information.

As per claim 21, the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

(i) implementing the modified price immediately via an electronic shelf label associated with the item.

Goodwin, III et al., discloses a method of changing an electronic price label display sequence with the step for:

(i) implementing the modified price immediately via an electronic shelf label associated with the item (see column 2, lines 63 through column 3, lines 1 – 6 which teach an electronic price label, EPL, through a managed process is capable of making changes to a display information, which includes price information).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that includes a validation process of Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., with the electronic price changing method as taught by Goodwin, III et al. The motivation to combine the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination with the methods described by Goodwin III et al., is to provide a flexible system for making immediate changes to the price of an item.

As per claim 22, Lee et al., discloses the claimed invention, however, fails to disclose:

(h1) modifying an expiration date of the selected coupon.

Goodwin, III et al., discloses a system for generating and redeeming unique product discount coupons over public computer networks with the step for:

(h1) modifying an expiration date of the selected coupon (see column 2, lines 63 through column 3, lines 1 – 6 which teach an electronic price label, EPL, through a managed process is capable of making changes to a display information, which includes promotional information. Examiner construes that changing the promotion information includes making changing changes to a coupon expiration date).

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention to combine the method for processing coupons by a self checkout system that

includes a validation process of Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., with the electronic price changing method as taught by Goodwin, III et al. The motivation to combine the Lee et al., and Jovicic et al., combination with the methods described by Goodwin III et al., is to provide a flexible system for making immediate changes to a coupon's information.

Conclusion

5. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. Persky et al., (US 6,497,362 B2) discloses a method for wireless assistance for self-service checkout and Sadler (US 6,571,218 B1) discloses a method for use in network of retail checkout terminals.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to ALVIN L. BROWN whose telephone number is (571)270-5109. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Thursday 7:30 AM to 5:00 PM Eastern Time.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Lynda Jasmin can be reached on 571 270 3033. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Art Unit: 4127

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ALB

/Lynda Jasmin/

Supervisory Patent Examiner, Art Unit 4127